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## THE MANUSCRIPT LEGACY OF ZOFIA STRYJEŃSKA (1891–1976) IN THE JAGIELLONIAN LIBRARY

[...] It is hard to imagine a greater popularity than Stryjeńska enjoyed in Poland in the 1920s and 1930s. Acting out and speaking out as her nerve and tastes dictated, she unexpectedly turned out to be a perfect match for the likings of a certain circle of the Polish intelligentsia, and her works became a favorite decorative motif in many interiors [...]. The success did not calm a jittery unrest that drove the artist's output. The last years before the second world war saw a certain inflation of Stryjeńska on the Polish market. Possessed by an agility demon, engulfed by constant fever and pursuit of earnings, she stopped ambitious experiments and responded to the public demand by repeating herself in diverse modes of return to the same motifs and subjects.

Over the years and despite the success, she did not change her outwardly projected image. Youthfully slim and always on the move, with a shock of curly hair over her forehead, a mischievous, penetrating look and a deep voice, she never lost an aptitude for wild antics, sharp retorts, and artistic-bohemian disorderly life, which solidified her legend over time [...].<sup>1</sup>

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Zofia Stryjeńska,<sup>2</sup> a Polish painter, one of the best known representatives of Art Déco – who due to the subjects and originality of her work was called the princess of Polish painting, enchantress, Slavic fairy – came down to be remembered mostly for her achievements in applied arts.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Mortkowicz-Olczakowa, *Pod znakiem kłoska*, Warszawa 1962, pp. 176–179.

<sup>2</sup> Biographical details are based on: J. Laskowicka, *Zofia Stryjeńska*, [in:] *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 44, Warszawa–Kraków 2006–2007, pp. 502–505; *Zofia Stryjeńska. Katalog wystawy w Muzeum Narodowym w Krakowie*, ed. Ś. Lenartowicz, Kraków 2008. The above comprise the latest bibliographical data pertaining to the life and work of Zofia Stryjeńska.

She was born on May 13, 1891 in the family of a Kraków glover Franiszek Grzymała-Lubański and Anna née Skrzyńska. She attended the Maria Niedzielska School of Fine Arts for Women and considered taking up a career as an artist. "I have moved past the period of amateur level," she would write in her journal after several years. This prompted her to employ an unheard-of strategy: in 1911, she started to study in Fine Arts Academy in Munich under the false name of Tadeusz Grzymała and dressed in man's clothes as the Academy accepted only males. On return to Kraków in 1912, she met an art critic Jerzy Warchałowski, who published the first enthusiastic reviews of her work. Owing to him, Miss Lubańska became a recognized member of the Kraków artistic environment before WWI as well as an instant social phenomenon. This is the time when she created illustration cycles *Polish Christmas Carols* (1913), *Canticles* (1913), and *Polish Female Figures in National Costumes* (1914), among others.

In 1916, Zofia Lubańska married an architect, sculptor and graphic artist Karol Stryjeński. They had three children: Magdalena (later Jaques-Dalcroze), born in 1918, and twins Jan (Kantuś) and Jacek, born in 1922. In 1918, Zofia Stryjeńska joined the Kraków Workshops group, where she designed tapestries, theatre and ballet sets and costumes, and toys. The following years were a period of immense activity and professional success. Since 1922, she belonged to the Association of Polish Artists "Rhythm," participated in many exhibitions as well as in Polish art expositions in Venice and Paris. There appeared her lithography cycles, like *Slavic Deities* (1918, 1922), illustrations to books by K. Przerwa-Tetmajer, I. Krasicki, J. Lechoń, sonnets by P. Ronsard as well as fairy tales and collections of nursery rhymes for children. 1925 saw the apex of her artistic success when she designed the Polish pavilion for the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris. Growing family conflicts (her husband got her hospitalized in a mental institution in Batowice near Kraków in 1927) led to the breakup of the marriage. Her successive relationship with an actor Artur Socha resulted in a divorce as well.

In the following years she made polychromies on the façades of buildings in the Old Town Marketplace in Warsaw. Portfolios of her illustrations *The Circle of the Polish Piasts* (1929), Kochanowski's *Threnodies* (1930), and *The Music of Podhale* by Stanisław Mierzyński were published. In 1932, her individual exhibition was held in the Municipal Industrial Museum in Lwów, where over 100 works were displayed. In the same year, she published tableaus of *Folk Costumes*, *Famous Poles* and *Polish Kings*. In 1934, she finished costumes for *Harnasie* ballet by Karol Szymanowski as well as her own stage projects: *Korowaj* ballet and *Resurrection: The Easter Song* mystery. In 1935, she displayed her works in the Institute of Art Propaganda. The exhibition attracted a broad interest as well as scandalized the public when a bailiff sequestered the pictures because of her debts. Her financial situation improved in the second half of the 1930s, due to government commissions, among others.

During the second world war Stryjeńska stayed with her mother, sister and children in Kraków. She earned her living by making commissioned pictures and portraits, designing postcards and advertisements, putting together a puppet theatre. After the war, she moved to Switzerland and travelled extensively between Geneva, Paris, and Brussels to earn money by her artistic endeavors: she painted commissioned pictures, designed postcards, and strove for reeditions of her previous publications. In Poland, while no word was spoken about her current artistic activity, her designs were exploited commercially on postcards, chocolate boxes, calendars. In 1962, she moved for a permanent stay in Geneva, where her children and their families lived. She died there on February 28, 1976.

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Manuscripts of Stryjeńska are a rarity nowadays. The directory of Manuscript collections held in libraries and museums in Poland mentions only her letters in the Kornel Makuszyński Museum in Zakopane.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to say that in 2014 there was only one autograph of Stryjeńska in the MS collection of the Jagiellonian Library: her shelfmark.<sup>4</sup> In that year, the Library bought another autograph of hers on an auction: a 1954 letter of Stryjeńska to an unknown recipient (possibly Mieczysław Pozdziejew) about a placement of her graphic works in the Pozdziejew Museum.<sup>5</sup> The more delighted we are therefore to have acquired so precious a collection as personal papers of Zofia Stryjeńska. The Jagiellonian Library was honored and happy to receive the legacy of Stryjeńska's manuscripts in 2014 as a gift from her descendants in Switzerland: Martine Sokolowski-Jaques-Dalcroze (daughter of Magdalena), Łukasz (son of Jacek), Barbara and Wanda Stryjeński (daughters of Jan), and Zofia Stryjeńska (daughter-in-law, wife of Jan).

The legacy consists of 57 units.<sup>6</sup> It starts with personal documents, such as a copy of birth certificate, documents related to the studies in Munich (receipt of the payments by Tadeusz Grzymała, student of Fine Art Academy in Munich, and a list of professors who offered classes in the Academy), as well as various membership cards (of the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in Warsaw, among others), passport, diploma of the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation Award in New York from 1972.<sup>7</sup> Another volume<sup>8</sup> contains records pertaining to Stryjeńska's life in Geneva

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<sup>3</sup> *Zbiory rękopisów w bibliotekach i muzeach w Polsce*, ed. D. K a m o l o w a, Warszawa 2014, p. 548.

<sup>4</sup> Kraków, Jagiellonian Library (BJ), MS Przyb. 101/82 – autographs from the collection of Piotr Stachiewicz and Anna and Michał Siedlecki.

<sup>5</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 555/14.

<sup>6</sup> BJ, MSS Przyb. 108–164/15.

<sup>7</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 108/15.

<sup>8</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 109/15.

from 1964 through 1976, chiefly bills and letters. Personal notes are supplemented with her journal,<sup>9</sup> sketchbooks,<sup>10</sup> biographical materials like CVs, lists of more important paintings and publications, printed exhibition catalogues, a leaflet of her painting studio where children portraits were commissioned.<sup>11</sup>

The next part of the legacy – 19 units<sup>12</sup> altogether – is an exceptionally treasured document: a memoir of Stryjeńska entitled *The Almost Daily Bread*. The text, which covers time up to 1956, is mostly autobiographical along with some typescripts and typescript copies with corrections in her hand while the part *Bratowice* consists of press cuttings. Of special interest due to its form is a fragment of a day-to-day journal from the first months of 1939 where notes were made on calendar leaves.<sup>13</sup> Considerable bits of the memoir, related to the postwar years in particular, were supplemented by the author with collages, letters, and photographs. Owing to Jan Stryjeński, the son of Zofia, the memoir has been published.<sup>14</sup>

The items pertaining to her artistic work are ordered chronologically. They begin with original postcards of the *Nativity Play* and *Christmas Carols* series (10 pieces) which were designed during WWI for the Supreme National Committee.<sup>15</sup> Next there is printed matter in Stryjeńska's graphical layout together with her handwritten notes: a copy of *Rzeczy Piękne (Fine Objects)* monthly from 1919<sup>16</sup> and a volume of fairy tales *Srocza kaszkę warzyła*<sup>17</sup> as well as press cuttings, photographs and fragments of the Polish pavilion catalogue for the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925.<sup>18</sup>

Outstanding in the collection is *Korowaj. Balet, czyli wieniec obrzędów w III odsłonach ułożony i dekorowany przez Z. Stryjeńską 1927 (Korowaj: Ballet or a Wreath of Rites in Three Scenes, Arranged and Embellished by Z. Stryjeńska, 1927)* – an autograph of the stage script with sketches of costumes and sets (8 pictures),<sup>19</sup> disposition of dancing groups (44 sketches),<sup>20</sup> and designs of stage sets and costumes in color (19 pieces).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>9</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 110/15.

<sup>10</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 132/15.

<sup>11</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 130/15.

<sup>12</sup> BJ, MSS Przyb. 111–29/15.

<sup>13</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 116/15.

<sup>14</sup> Z. S t r y j e Ń s k a, *Chleb prawie że powszedni*, ed., introduction, notes, and index M. G r o Ń s k a, vol. 1–2, Warszawa 1995.

<sup>15</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 133/15.

<sup>16</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 134/15.

<sup>17</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 139/15.

<sup>18</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 135/15.

<sup>19</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 136/15.

<sup>20</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 137/15.

<sup>21</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 138/15.

Individual catalog numbers are given to diverse items, mainly scripts and notes to other works by Stryjeńska: *Resurrection. The Easter Song. A Religious Play in Six Scenes*,<sup>22</sup> *Deities or Slavic Symbols*,<sup>23</sup> *The Sounds of Colors. A Synthesis*,<sup>24</sup> scripts of fairy tales for a puppet theatre: *A Tale of Two Brothers Okpila and Biedzila*, *A Tale of the Sleeping Beauty*, *The Fern Flower (An Apotheosis of the Autumn)*,<sup>25</sup> in addition to materials for the portfolios *Polish Folk Costumes* and *Polish Folk Dances*<sup>26</sup> as well as *The Polish Pantheon*.<sup>27</sup>

These are followed by further printed matter: *Światowiec nowoczesny czy zasady dobrego wychowania (A Modern Man of the World or the Rules of Good Manners)*, a book published in Paris in 1948 under the penname of prof. Hillar,<sup>28</sup> as well as portfolios of images of famous Poles *The Polish Pantheon*, published in Paris in 1954,<sup>29</sup> and *The Polish Dances* after the drawings by Zofia Stryjeńska from 1929<sup>30</sup> and *The Polish Rites* after her drawings of 1931,<sup>31</sup> both published in Poland in 1979.

The part of the legacy connected with Stryjeńska's creative output is completed by a portfolio of photos of her works of art that were taken in the 1990s.<sup>32</sup> Further units contain press cuttings related to Stryjeńska, which are often accompanied by her curt comments about the quality of reproductions.<sup>33</sup> Successive albums of cuttings were arranged by Stryjeńska herself: *Recenzje (Reviews) 1917–1930*,<sup>34</sup> *Cztery pory roku w życiu ludu polskiego (Four Seasons in the Life of Polish Peasants) 1929–1930*,<sup>35</sup> *Radio Philips 1931* (press cuttings related mainly to the exhibition of Zofia Stryjeńska and Henryk Kuna in the Phillips Co. showroom in Warsaw in 1931),<sup>36</sup> and *Lwów 1932* (an album devoted to her individual exhibition there).<sup>37</sup>

The letters of the artist from the years 1925–1972 constitute another precious part of the legacy.<sup>38</sup> Most of the 350 letters to Stryjeńska deal with professional mat-

<sup>22</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 140/15.

<sup>23</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 141/15.

<sup>24</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 142/15.

<sup>25</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 143/15.

<sup>26</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 148/15.

<sup>27</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 147/15.

<sup>28</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 144/15.

<sup>29</sup> BJ, MSS Przyb. 146–47/15.

<sup>30</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 149/15.

<sup>31</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 150/15.

<sup>32</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 151/15.

<sup>33</sup> BJ, MSS Przyb. 152–57/15.

<sup>34</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 152/15.

<sup>35</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 153/15.

<sup>36</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 154/15.

<sup>37</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 155/15.

<sup>38</sup> The correspondence of Z. Stryjeńska (BJ, MSS Przyb. 158–60/15), “Letters to and from Her Children” (BJ, MS Przyb. 161/15), and letters of Zofia Stryjeńska (BJ, MS Przyb. 162/15).

ters; those before WWII focus on details of participation in exhibitions or designing stage sets and costumes for theatre performances (e.g. letters from the Polish Embassy in Paris and National Opera in Warsaw about costumes to *Harnasie* by Karol Szymanowski) while those after the war concern mostly commissions.

The correspondence with the family, mainly postwar, is also extensive. It comprises letters from her children and sisters (Janina Braun, Stefania Dygat, and Maria Maksysio-wa) and includes Zofia Stryjeńska's responses as well (ca. 50 letters). Among those letters, valuable autographs are to be found, i.a. from Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, Jadwiga and Józef Beck, Achilles Breza, Ignacy Daszyński, Arkady Fiedler, Henryk Kuna, Jan Lechoń, Witold Małcużyński, Juliusz Osterwa, Waclaw Sieroszewski, Antoni Słonim-ski, Artur Swinarski, Arnold Szyfman, Jerzy Warchałowski, Zofia and Tadeusz Żeleński.

Finally, there are family documents: Franciszek Lubański's memoir of 1894–1922 (two notebooks),<sup>39</sup> family photographs (ca. 40 items),<sup>40</sup> and a collection of materials pertaining to Stryjeńska's relatives.<sup>41</sup>

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After being sorted out and recorded in the accession register of the Jagiellonian Library Manuscript Section, the legacy was displayed in an exhibition *Stryjeńska. A Portrait Made of Words*, which was held from November 19 through December 18, 2015 in the Library. Subsequently, the Library received another packet from the descendants which contained: a student card of the Fine Arts Academy for Tadeusz Grzymała (1911/1912), letters to the daughter, press cuttings (i.a. Stryjeńska's obituaries from 1976), and a printed catalog of the Paris exposition (1925)<sup>42</sup> as well as some of the papers of Jacek Stryjeński (1922–1961), including his curriculum vitae, obituary, cuttings and photographs pertaining to his artistic career, a catalog of the 1968 exhibition, letters of Nina Żółtowska and Halina Kenar of 1958 related to Antoni Kenar.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, Zofia Stryjeńska's nephew Łukasz Lubański, who lives in Denmark, presented the Library with a letter from Zofia to her brother Tadeusz Lubański<sup>44</sup> along with personal documents of Tadeusz Lubański from the period 1899–1932, mainly school certificates, inclusive of certificates of apprenticeship and work as a glover.<sup>45</sup>

Translated by Dariusz Rossowski

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<sup>39</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 163/15.

<sup>40</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 131/15.

<sup>41</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 164/15: items such as documents and press cuttings related to the Lubański, Skrzyński, and Stryjeński families.

<sup>42</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 34/16.

<sup>43</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 35/16.

<sup>44</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 217/15.

<sup>45</sup> BJ, MS Przyb. 39/16.

## SUMMARY

Zofia Stryjeńska was one of the most famous Polish Art Déco painters. Known mainly for her work in the applied arts, she was very popular in Poland before World War II. In 1945, she left her homeland to live abroad. It was only in 2014 that some of her manuscripts – which had been preserved by Stryjeńska's closest family in Switzerland – were donated to the Jagiellonian Library. This donation consists of 57 units (BJ, MSS Przyb. 108–164/15) and includes Stryjeńska's personal papers, her memoirs, fragments of her various works (inter alia, her sketchbook, the manuscript of a scenario for the ballet *Korowaj* and sketches of the costumes for that ballet), her correspondence, press cuttings (mainly reviews and reproductions of Stryjeńska's works) and family notes and documents. The legacy of Zofia Stryjeńska was displayed at an exhibition entitled *Stryjeńska. A Portrait Made of Words* which was held at the Jagiellonian Library from 19<sup>th</sup> November to 18<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Stryjeńska's nephew and her other heirs subsequently donated further items to the Library, which enriched the collection (shelfmarks: MSS Przyb. 217/05, 34–36/16, 39/16).

## KEYWORDS:

Zofia Stryjeńska, manuscript legacy

SPUŚCIZNA RĘKOPIŚMIENNA  
ZOFII STRYJEŃSKIEJ (1891–1976)

## STRESZCZENIE

Zofia Stryjeńska – polska malarka, jedna z najbardziej znanych przedstawicielek art déco. Popularna przed II wojną światową artystka, kojarzona przede wszystkim ze sztuką użytkową, okres po 1945 roku spędziła na obczyźnie. Zachowany w Szwajcarii, w rękach najbliższej rodziny, fragment jej spuścizny rękopiśmiennej został przekazany Bibliotece Jagiellońskiej przez spadkobierców w 2014 roku. Składająca się z 57 jednostek spuścizna (BJ, sygn. rkps Przyb. 108–164/15) obejmuje: dokumenty osobiste, pamiętnik, fragmenty twórczości (ze szkicownikiem, autografem scenariusza baletu *Korowaj* oraz ze szkicami kostiumów do niego), korespondencję i listy, wycinki prasowe (przede wszystkim z recenzjami i reprodukcjami jej dzieł), materiały rodzinne. Spuścizna Zofii Stryjeńskiej została zaprezentowana na wystawie *Stryjeńska. Portret ze słów*, zorganizowanej w Bibliotece Jagiellońskiej w dniach 19 XI–18 XII 2015 roku. Już po jej zakończeniu Biblioteka otrzymała od spadkobierców Stryjeńskiej oraz od jej bratanka materiały uzupełniające spuściznę (sygn. rkps Przyb. 217/05, 34–36/16, 39/16).

## SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:

Zofia Stryjeńska, spuścizna rękopiśmienna